

## PUBLIC HEALTH

# WHO is Free of Disputes

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► THE United Nations has one organization nobody fights about. It is the only one on which everybody agrees. Its meetings are peaceful, with everyone happy, no one voting and no one vetoing.

This unique agency is the World Health Organization. The only fly in the ointment is that WHO's constitution has not yet received its necessary 26 ratifications by United Nations members.

Its efficiency in meeting the threat of a worldwide spread of cholera from Egypt is an example of one important function this organization has. Equally if not more important, in the view of WHO leaders and other health authorities, is its potential ability to bring not only health but peace to the world.

The United Nations may be able to agree on some method of removing such immediate threats to peace as the atom bomb and germ warfare. But for lasting peace, health authorities and even some political authorities agree, the peoples of the world must have sound minds in sound bodies.

Sick minds inspired most of the horrors of the last war if not the war itself. The man in the street knows this as well as the psychologist in his laboratory, the psychiatrist in his office or clinic. Preventing sick minds in the world in the future is one of WHO's aims. Significant of this is the fact that the executive secretary of WHO's interim

commission, Dr. Brock Chisholm, is a psychiatrist. Significant also are the following principles laid down by WHO's founders at the International Health Conference:

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

"The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security. . . .

"Healthy development of the child is of basic importance; the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment is essential to such development.

"The extension to all peoples of the benefits of medical, psychological and related knowledge is essential to the fullest attainment of health."

Readiness to achieve these aims through the World Health Organization has been shown by the following 17 United Nations members who have ratified WHO's constitution: Canada, China, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Siam, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the Union of South Africa. Expected to ratify before the end of this year or early in 1948 are: Yugoslavia, Brazil, France, Denmark, the United States and India.

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**TUSSOCK MARSH**—In this typical Alaskan "Mosquito Heaven", endless stretches of shallow, quiet water, ideal for breeding purposes, are almost completely concealed by tiny, high-standing islets bearing grasses, sedges and other vegetation.

extent the movement of blood not yet sludged.

Sludged blood has been seen in patients with conditions ranging from hysteria, burns and common colds to cancer, scarlet fever, infantile paralysis and arthritis, or rheumatism.

There are many different kinds of blood sludges, the scientists report. How a particular sludge can damage the body depends on the chemical makeup of the material holding the blood cells together in wads and on the size, shape and other physical characteristics of the particular sludge.

Many sludges could be expected to do at least small amounts of permanent damage to the body. How all the damages by sludges add up as parts of the aging process, and how fast they can add up over short periods of years need to be studied.

Dr. Knisely's studies of patients, healthy persons and laboratory animals from which discovery of sludged blood was made have been going on over 16 years. Many of them have been made by observing the small blood vessels in the eyelids and covering of the eyeball of living animals and patients. Oblique illumination and binocular dissecting microscopes were used.

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## MEDICINE

# Clue to Aging Is Found

Clumping of cells in the blood vessels may cause damage which contributes to growing old, mental illness and many other diseases.

► SLUDGED blood in the arteries and veins holds the key to solution of problems of aging, mental illness and many other diseases, it appears from a report by Drs. Melvin H. Knisely, Edward H. Bloch, Theodore S. Eliot and Louise Warner, of the Universities of Chicago, Copenhagen and Tennessee, to the journal, *Science*, (Nov. 7).

In normal, healthy young persons the blood cells move along the veins and arteries, even very tiny blood vessels, without sticking to each other or to the walls of the blood vessels. But in a wide variety of sicknesses and in shock following accidents, the cells clump and stick together, forming a sludge which moves slowly if at all and which blocks to some

ECOLOGY

# Mosquitoes Tracked Down

Botanists work with entomologists in finding mosquito breeding grounds in Alaska and developing field methods for identifying them by airplane.

► BOTANISTS are playing a vital role in the campaign against the worst summer enemies our troops in Alaska have to face—mosquitoes. Entomologists spot the “wigglers” that are their infants, as they swim in still pools of water. The job of the botanists is to learn what types of vegetation grow around the mosquito nurseries, often concealing them altogether, and to develop practical field methods whereby these plant associations may be identified from a distance with a pair of binoculars, or even from high-altitude airplane photographs.

At a meeting of the Biological Society of Washington, Rev. Hugh O'Neill, professor of botany at the Catholic University of America, told of pioneer studies along this line which he and two colleagues, Rev. Artheme Dutilly, director of the Arctic Institute in Washington, and M. l'Abbe Ernest LePage of the

school of agriculture at Rimouski, Quebec, conducted last summer at the invitation of the Quartermaster General. The work was done as part of an expedition in which eight government agencies, both civil and military, cooperated under the direction of Dr. Bernard V. Travis of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Number one mosquito breeding ground, the three botanists found, is what Father O'Neill described as “tussock marsh”. This is a swampy terrain dotted with innumerable little heaps of debris which stand high enough above the water level to support a few dry-land plants. Between these and the true swamp plants, such as sedges and willows, the watery nature of the terrain is well camouflaged—from man, but not from mosquitoes. There are also more

open marshes, in which pools and ponds are clearly visible; these seem to constitute an earlier stage in the vegetational development.

While these marshes afford breeding-space for billions of mosquitoes, the stinging pests do not overlook even small bays. They were found breeding in water-filled cavities left by the roots of overturned trees, and even in puddles formed by the treads of caterpillar tractors.

The Alaskan mosquito, Father O'Neill said, “has the table manners of a Bengal tiger,” and bores right in instantly whenever the slightest area of skin is exposed. However, the new Army insect repellent, developed during the war, is very effective in driving them off, and DDT fog knocks them out promptly. The mosquito's fellow-pirate, the black fly or no-see-um, proved less susceptible to both repellent and DDT. Something more drastic will have to be found for combating black fly.

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BIOLOGY

## Two Naturalists To Gather Data on Antarctic Life

► MORE penguins for the National Zoological Park and information for the National Museum about life in the strange “oases” in Antarctica's icy desert are the objectives of two young naturalists who will accompany the Navy's new expedition to the world's southernmost waters.

The still-unknown life forms of the mysterious ice-free areas seen from the air by members of the recent Byrd expedition will be studied on the ground by David C. Nutt. He will also make collections of marine life along the shores of Antarctica and by dredging on the bottom under the ice shelf.

Mr. Nutt, a Dartmouth man who was a Navy officer during the war, has made himself a specialist in polar natural history. He has devised some new things in the way of comfortable clothing for cold regions, which he hopes to demonstrate on the present voyage.

Malcolm Davis, keeper of the bird house at the National Zoological Park, brought back a big flock of penguins when he returned from his previous Antarctic trip with the first Byrd Expedition, and has been a collector of birds and animals in the tropics as well. He is particularly anxious to secure Emperor, Adelie and Gentoo penguins on this expedition, and if possible some Antarctic seals as well.

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**DECEPTIVE BEAUTY**—This little lake, with a mountain in the background and attractive surroundings of plant life, may be a plague-spot for mosquitoes. They do not breed in the open water, but in the marshy areas that are concealed by parts of the surrounding vegetation.